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TWO DEBTS OF SCOTT TO *LE MORTE D'ARTHUR*

There are two passages in *Ivanhoe* which seem to be founded on two incidents related in *Le Morte D'Arthur*. It is, of course, well known that Scott was widely read in the literature of chivalry. He was an ardent admirer of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, as appears from two letters to Southey in 1807,<sup>1</sup> and even meditated an edition of the book, a project which he dropped on learning of Southey's like intention. In the earlier of the two letters which I have mentioned, Scott says that he possessed the 1637<sup>2</sup> edition of the romance.

The first passage in *Ivanhoe* which seems derived from Malory's romance is a part of the tournament incident.<sup>3</sup> The Ninth Book of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, chapter twenty-six to chapter thirty-five,<sup>4</sup> contains what are apparently the sources of many of the details connected with certain of the participants and their conduct in Scott's tournament of Ashby de la Zouche. In chapter twenty-six Sir Tristram of Lyonesse is on his way to the Castle of Maidens where a tournament has been proclaimed by King Carados of Scotland and the King of North Wales. There is some jousting before the tournament begins and in it Sir Tristram takes part. In chapter thirty he provides himself with a black shield "with none other remembraunce therin," and so equipped takes part in the tourney. He is successful in his tilting and is adjudged the winner of the day under the title of "the Knyght with the black sheld," for although some are certain that he is Sir Tristram and some merely suspect his identity, yet no one absolutely penetrates his disguise and makes him known. Sir Tristram has allied himself with the weaker party—that opposing King Arthur's and Sir Launcelot's,

"where the most noble knyghts of the world ben."<sup>5</sup> It should be noticed, too, that he withdraws secretly from the field at the end of each day. The prize for the last day's jousting is awarded to Sir Launcelot, who resigns it to Sir Tristram. The latter, who has left the field, cannot be found, however.

In Scott's novel Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe is leading one of the parties on the second day of the tournament at Ashby. The opposing party, that of Prince John's followers, is perhaps the stronger. During the early part of the jousting King Richard, who has just returned from his Austrian prison, and who, disguised, is taking part in the tournament, keeps near the edge of the lists. His accouterments and even his horse are black. At the moment when Sir Wilfred is in great danger of being overthrown by Front-de-Boeuf and Sir Athelstone of Coningsburgh Richard comes to the rescue, beats down the assailants, and then retires. Soon afterward Prince John ends the tournament by casting down his truncheon. The prize for the day is given to the party of Ivanhoe and the individual honors to Richard. He is nowhere to be found, however, when the honors are to be given and some of the spectators report his having retired from the lists into a near-by wood.

Some points of resemblance are plainly visible in comparing the synopses given in the preceding paragraphs. Others must be got from the reading and the comparing of the two incidents which I have considered. The points falling to the former class are as follows: the use of plain black armor by the King and Sir Tristram as a disguise; each one's attaching himself to what is apparently the weaker party; each one's retiring privately from the field at the end of the day's fighting and allowing the prize to go to another. The two men are given descriptive nicknames which are somewhat similar—The Knight with the Black Shield and Le Noir Faineant. It is suspected that the unknown knight in Malory's tournament is Sir Tristram; Richard is not recognized or even suspected. Sir Wilfred, who is also unknown, is, however, in the course of the first day's jousting, suspected of being Coeur de Lion. Indeed, the

<sup>1</sup> November, 1807; December 15, 1807. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, by John Gibson Lockhart. Edinburgh, 1862. Vol. III, pp. 31, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Probably 1634, as there is no mention of a 1637 edition.

<sup>3</sup> Chapters VIII, IX, X, XI, XIII. (The last chapter mentioned contains most of the material for my comparison.) The Border Edition, London and New York, 1906.

<sup>4</sup> *Le Morte D'Arthur*, by Syr Thomas Malory . . . Edited by H. Oskar Sommer, Ph. D. London, 1889, pp. 378-396.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter XXXI.

deeds of Sir Tristram at the Castle of Maidens seem to a certain extent to be divided between Ivanhoe and the King.

The second incident to which I wish to call attention is found in chapter forty-four of *Ivanhoe*, and the passage which it calls to mind in *Le Morte D'Arthur* is chapter six, book eighteen. Queen Guenevere is to be burned for "treason"—the poisoning of Sir Patrice at a feast—unless some knight will do battle for her against her accuser, Sir Mador de la Porte, and overcome him. Sir Launcelot, her usual champion, has been banished from court so that Sir Bors takes the Queen's part with the provision that he withdraw if a better knight come to take his place. The court assembles in the meadows near Westminster. The stake is ready and the two knights, Bors and Mador, withdraw to the opposite ends of the lists. At this point a knight in strange armor appears and volunteers to defend the Queen. Sir Bors withdraws in his favor, and the new champion and Sir Mador fight, with the result that the latter is badly wounded and forced to yield and to retract the charges which he has made against Guenevere. The stranger proves to be Sir Launcelot, who has taken this opportunity of righting himself at court.

In *Ivanhoe* the Jewess, Rebecca, has been condemned to death by fire for sorcery, in a court of Knights Templars. The Templars are assembled in the tiltyard at Templestowe. The stake and faggots are ready. Rebecca's accuser, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, is waiting fully armed to prove his charges on anyone who may champion the young woman's cause. Just as her guilt is about to be declared established because of the absence of any defender, Sir Wilfred appears to do battle as Rebecca's champion. After some parleying the two knights charge each other. Very luckily for the nearly-disabled Ivanhoe, Sir Brian dies of some sort of stroke before the combat has really begun. As a result, the Jewess is freed, as the charge of sorcery is considered disproved.

These passages are, it is true, not alike to a remarkable degree, yet the germ of Scott's can be seen, it seems plain, in the chapter of *Le Morte D'Arthur* which has been summarized. The method of punishment, the lack of a defender and the scarcity of friends, the opportune arrival of a champion, and the outcome of the combat,—

these all point toward a relation between the two incidents. The ease with which Ivanhoe obtains his victory is due to the exigencies of Scott's story, of course, and is, therefore, an unimportant variation. Taking it and the other differences between the stories in both of the cases which I have cited, and considering them together with the parallels which have been brought out, one can, I believe, hardly escape admitting the existence of a certain relationship between those particular parts of *Ivanhoe* and of *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

R. S. FORSYTHE.

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#### NOTE SUR LE POUR ET LE CONTRE DE VOLTAIRE

*Le Pour et le Contre*<sup>1</sup> est le titre donné en 1775 au poème intitulé jusqu'à cette date *Épître à Uranie*,<sup>2</sup> "argumentation rigoureuse contre la religion révélée"<sup>3</sup> que Voltaire conclut par l'apologie de la "religion naturelle."—Il ne semble pas que l'*Épître à Uranie* ait été imprimée avant 1738,<sup>4</sup> mais il est hors de doute qu'elle a été composée au plus tard en 1731<sup>5</sup> et qu'elle courut à Paris en 1732.<sup>6</sup>

On identifie d'ordinaire l'*Épître à Uranie* avec une *Épître à Julie* qui serait perdue, mais que Voltaire aurait lue à Jean-Baptiste Rousseau en septembre 1722, lorsqu'il le rencontra à Bruxelles.<sup>7</sup>—Quelles preuves a-t-on de l'ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, éd. Moland, ix, pp. 358-362.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 358, n.; cf. Georges Bengesco, *Voltaire, Bibliographie de ses œuvres*, Paris, 1882-1885, I, pp. 160-161.

<sup>3</sup> G. Lanson, *Voltaire*<sup>2</sup> (les Grands Écrivains Français), Paris, 1910, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> G. Bengesco, *l. l.*; v. pourtant G. Desnoiresterres, *La Jeunesse de Voltaire*,<sup>2</sup> Paris, 1871, pp. 459-460.

<sup>5</sup> *Œuv. Volt.*, xxxiii, p. 215 (lettre à Thieriot, du 30 juin 1731).

<sup>6</sup> *Œuv. Volt.*, ix, p. 358, n.; G. Bengesco, *l. l.*; cf. Desnoiresterres, *l. l.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*; *ibid.*; *ibid.*—M. Lanson, *l. l.*, a douté de cette identification: "il n'est pas sûr qu'il (Voltaire) écrivit ainsi en 1722," mais déjà il "pensait ainsi."